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## Khajjanīya Sutta<sup>1</sup>

The Discourse on the Devoured | S 22.79

Theme: Understanding the aggregates leads to liberation

Translated by Piya Tan ©2006

### 1 Sutta summary

**1.1 The Khajjanīya Sutta** is a good example of a “practice sutta,” that is, one that serves as a reflection for spiritual joy and insight. The sutta has a systematic framework and natural flow of ideas, and is basically a set of variations on the theme of the 5 aggregates. The Sutta opens with the Buddha stating that all that we can know of ourselves (eg through retrocognition) are the 5 aggregates or one of them [§§3-4].

**1.2** In the second section [§§5-9], the aggregates are defined. The Sutta explains why each aggregate is so called,

and it is revealing that these explanations are phrased in terms of functions rather than fixed essences. This treatment of the aggregates as dynamic functions rather than substantial entities already pulls the ground away from the urge to grasp upon them as containing a permanent essence that can be considered the ultimate ground of being. (Bodhi, S:B 841)

In other words, the definitions are not exactly technical etymologies but what we might regard as meditative reflection that help to understand the nature of the aggregates better for the sake of insight into true reality.

**1.3** The following third section (“Devoured by the aggregates”) [§§10-15] gives the Sutta its title, and is obviously the key section or what makes this sutta stand out amongst the rest. The key verb here is *khajjati* (he is eaten by), which is the passive present (3<sup>rd</sup> person singular) form of *khādati* (he eats).<sup>2</sup> This underlies the ongoing action of the aggregates: they eat us away without our knowing, bringing on suffering or laying the bases for constant and growing pain.

**1.4** The basis of spiritual practice for overcoming suffering is that of “disowning the aggregates,” that is, to reflect on their impermanent nature, which brings on suffering, and, as such, is without an enduring entity. Or, more simply, we avoid the pronouns, “I,” “me,” and “mine,” that is, not to own the suffering, to just let go of it. This forms the fourth section [§§16-20].

**1.5** The fifth section deals with the famous totality formula, which reminds us that all possible forms of aggregates should be disowned: “This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self.” The fruit of this constant and correct practice is that we find the path to awakening. We become a learner (*sekha*),<sup>3</sup> that is, we truly begin to directly imbibe the force of insight giving an increasingly clearer and more liberating vision of true reality.

**1.6** Even if we were to “stop” here, awakening is guaranteed by way of streamwinning, that is, we clear away our sufferings within seven lives at most.<sup>4</sup> If we refine our practice to the point of being able to totally see through the aggregates, so that we are revulsed by them, that is, we are no more deluded by them by living happily, seeing true reality, then we have become arhats. The import of this sixth section is that the arhat is an adept (*asekha*), one who has learnt all that needs learning for one’s liberation.

**1.7** The Sutta closes with a devotional stanza attributed to three well known Vedic high gods, who appear in **the Sandha Sutta** (A 11.10), where it appears thrice and clearly fits the context better than here.<sup>5</sup> The mention of these Vedic gods is for the benefit of those who in the Buddha’s time believe in them, but showing them to be still unliberated and less knowing than an arhat.

<sup>1</sup> *Khajjanīya*, “to be eaten, connected with being eaten,” future passive participle of *khādati* (he eats). PTS ed titles it wrongly as “Sīha” (S 3:86); the *uddāna* has *khajjani* (a mnemonic). See S:W 3:72 n3.

<sup>2</sup> It is possible to render *khajjati* as “being devoured (by),” but the proper Pali for this is *khajjamāna*.

<sup>3</sup> That is, any of the saints, short of an arhat: see SD 11.1 (5) Types of saints.

<sup>4</sup> On streamwinning, see **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3.

<sup>5</sup> A 11.10/5:324-326.

## 2 The verbs of the teaching

**2.0** Verbs are action words: they inform us about actions or what to do. There are four pairs of verbs in the Khajjanīya Sutta [§§26-37], namely:

(1) dismantles	<i>apacināti</i>	&	does not pile up	<i>no ācināti</i>
(2) abandons	<i>pajahati</i>	&	does not cling	<i>na upādiyati</i>
(3) is dissociated from	<i>visineti</i>	&	does not associate with	<i>no ussineti</i>
(4) extinguishes	<i>vidhūpeti</i>	&	does not kindle	<i>na sandhūpeti</i>

### 2.1 APACINĀTI

**2.1.1** Both *apacināti* (he dismantles, diminishes) and *ācināti* (he piles up) [§§27, 33] come from the same stem, *cināti* (Skt *cinoti*, *cayati*) from √CI, “to heap up”; hence, also the senses, “to collect, to accumulate,” and from which we get the word *cetiya*, “tumulus, relic mound,” originally referring to a pile of earth over which bodily remains are interred.

**2.1.2** The prefix *apa-* has the senses of “without, outside, away from, off,” so that *apacināti* means “he does away with.” An example is found here:

*evam apacinato dukkham santike nibbānam vuccati.*

Thus doing away with suffering, he is said to be close to nirvana.

(S 4:74-76 = Tha 807-817), SD 5.9

**2.1.3** In fact, this is a refrain in **the Māluṅkya,putta’s Thera,gāthā**, also found in **the Māluṅkya,putta Sutta** (S 35.95),<sup>6</sup> where he reflects on his non-delighting in the six sense-objects, which might be taken as a sort of internal commentary of *apacināti*, thus:

Not delighting in ⟨**sounds...mind-objects**⟩, having seen a ⟨form...a mind-object⟩,  
he is truly mindful,

With a detached mind, he feels<sup>7</sup> it, but does not go on clinging to it.

Even as he ⟨sees a form...cognizes a mind-object⟩ and sensing a feeling,

It dies away, not heaped up: thus mindful he conducts himself.

Thus doing away with suffering, he’s said to be close to nirvana. [S 4:74-76 = Tha 806-817]

**2.1.4** The prefix *ā-* has a wide range of meanings, such as “presence, limit, embracing, grasping, nearness,” so that *ācināti* means “he heaps up, accumulates (karma),” as in

*pūراتi bālo pāpassa thoka,thokam pi ācinam*

The foolish fills up with evil, accumulating it little by little. (Dh 121)

### 2.2 PAJAHATI

**2.2.1** The verbs *pajahati* (he abandons) & *upādiyati* (he clings to) [§§28, 34] are clearly opposites. *Pajahati* derives from *pa + jahati, jahāti* (he abandons, forsakes, renounces, literally & figuratively), from √HĀ, “to give up.” The most common form of this root is the gerund *hitvā* (having abandoned).<sup>8</sup> The prefix *pa-* gives a directional sense, often translated as “up, out or about,” as in “he gives up (literally & figuratively).” One of the most common forms of the verb *pajahati* is *pahāya*, for example, in the following stanza by Vaṅgīsa, from **the Pesalā Atimaññanā Sutta** (S 8.3):

*Tasmā akhilo ’dha padhānavā  
nīvaraṇāni pahāya visuddho  
mānañ ca pahāya asesam  
vijjā-y-antakaro samitāvī ti*

Therefore be not mentally barren here, be assertive;  
With the abandoning of the hindrances, one is pure;  
And with the utter abandoning of conceit,  
One is an end-maker<sup>9</sup> through wisdom, at peace.

<sup>6</sup> S 35.95/4:72-75 @ SD 5.9.

<sup>7</sup> *Vedeti*, this is the simplest word for “he experiences, feels, knows” a sensation. Cf *paṭisamvedeti* (he experiences), caus of √VID, “to know,” very common in **Ānāpānasati S** (M 118.18-25). This latter word connotes a more conscious and mindful action.

<sup>8</sup> D 2:241 f, 286, 3:81; M 1:474 f, 2:196; S 1:9 f, 15; A 3:354, 5:232 f, 253; Sn 284, 328 407; Dh 29, 88.

<sup>9</sup> That is, one makes an end of suffering (M 1:47; Sn 337; It 16).

Line a of the stanza exhorts one to cultivate mindfulness so that with the abandoning of the mental hindrances<sup>10</sup> (line b), mental focus or dhyana is attained, which is helpful in working towards liberating insight.<sup>11</sup> The abandoning of conceit (*māna*)—the destruction of the complexes of superiority, of inferiority, and of equality<sup>12</sup>—refers to the attaining of arhathood.

**2.2.2** The verb *upādiyati* (he clings to) derives from *upa-* (expressing “nearness,” meaning “close up to,” and intensifying the verb or noun it prefixes) and *ādiyati*<sup>13</sup> (he takes up, grasps at). It can here be taken as identical with “clinging”: *upādiyatī ti upādānaṃ*.<sup>14</sup> Two forms of clinging are usually mentioned: clinging to sensual pleasures and to views. In brief, clinging to sensual pleasures (*kāma’upādāna*) is synonymous with sensual desire, sensual lust, sensual delight, sensual craving, etc. Clinging to views (*diṭṭh’upādāna*) is the taking up of any wrong view.<sup>15</sup> On a very simple level, both these clinging are temporarily overcome when the 5 hindrances are overcome, as in this statement from **the Nandiya Sutta** (A 11.14): *pāpake akusale dhamme na upādiyati* (he does not cling to evil unwholesome states).<sup>16</sup>

**2.3** The verbs *visineti* (he dissociates from, discards) and *ussineti*<sup>17</sup> (he associates with, is involved with) [§§29, 35] are opposites but are closely related. *Visineti* is sometimes read as *viseneti*. Like Bodhi,<sup>18</sup> I here follow K R Norman’s suggestion: “The verb *visineti* (S 3:89,31) is explained (SA 2:296,22) as: *viseneti no usseneti ti vikirati na sampiṇḍeti* (‘*Viseneti* means “not associating (with),” that is, not mixing (with), not combining (with).’)<sup>19</sup>

*Ussineti* means “he associates with, mixes with, is involved with, is attached to,” and has another opposite, *paṭisseneti* (he rejects), as in this line from **the Pema Sutta** (A 4.200), spoken in connection with the 5 aggregates, that is,

*Bhikkhu n’ev’usseneti na-p,paṭisseneti*      The monk is neither attracted to nor rejects...  
(A 4.200,8-12/2:214 f)

Evidently, *visineti* (or *viseneti*) and *paṭisseneti*<sup>20</sup> are synonyms, and that *ussineti/usseneti* and *paṭisseneti* are antonyms. The commentary to **the Pema Sutta** (A 4.200) glosses *na usseneti* as *diṭṭhi,vasena na ukkhipati* (he is not agitated on account of views) (AA 3:209). On a simple practical level, all this means that the practitioner should maintain a calm, even equanimous, mind in the face of the 8 winds—of gain and loss, of fame and ill fame, of happiness and sorrow, of praise and blame<sup>21</sup>—as they arise on account of the aggregates.

**2.4** The last pair of verbs are “he extinguishes” (*vidhūpeti*) and its opposite “he kindles” (*sandhūpeti*) [§§30, 36]. Let us first look at the dictionary meanings of these words. *Vidhūpeti* derives from *vi-* (here, has the sense of “asunder, apart”) + *dhūpayati* (causative of *dhūpa*), to fumigate, make fragrant (with incense). As such, we have two senses here: the literal, meaning “to fumigate, perfume, diffuse”,<sup>22</sup> and the

<sup>10</sup> The 5 mental hindrances (*pañca,nīvaraṇa*) are: sensual desire (*kāma-c,chanda*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīna,middha*), restlessness and worry (*uddhacca,kukkucca*), and doubt (*vicikicchā*): see **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (8).

<sup>11</sup> On how to apply insight to dhyana, see **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1(10.3).

<sup>12</sup> See esp SD 14.9(3), also (1); and also SD 14.13(2).

<sup>13</sup> From *ā* (here has a limiting sense) + √DĀ, “to give.”

<sup>14</sup> UA 42,5 = Vism 527,24. On *upādāna*, see (**Paṭicca,samuppāda**) **Vibhaṅga S** (S 12.2.6/2:3), SD 5.15.

<sup>15</sup> M 1:67, 330\*, 498. For def of the 4 types of clinging (*upādāna*), see Dhs §§1214-17.

<sup>16</sup> A 11.14.8/5:337,5.

<sup>17</sup> CPD lists *usseneti* as the main headword, saying that *ussineti* is its “frequent byform” (ie vl). See BHSD sv *viśrenī-katvā* & also SD 12.4(6.8).

<sup>18</sup> S:B 435 n382.

<sup>19</sup> Sn:N 307 f n793. Bodhi however here renders *visineti* and *ussineti* as “scatters” and “amasses” respectively without any explanation.

<sup>20</sup> VII *paṭisseneti* (A 2:214, 215); *paṭiseniyati* (Sn 390).

<sup>21</sup> A 8.5/4:157.

<sup>22</sup> This usage is rare in the Canon; Miln 252.

figurative, “to scatter, destroy.”<sup>23</sup> Curiously, *sandhūpeti* (*sam-*, in the sense of “together, one” + *dhūpeti* = *dhūpayati*) has almost the same sense as *vidhūpeti*. *Sandhūpeti* means “he fumigates,”<sup>24</sup> but the form *sandhūpāyati* is more common.<sup>25</sup>

However, if we go by the prefixes, we could take *vi-dhūpeti* to mean “to scatter the smoke,” and *sandhūpeti*, as the antonym, “to smoke up (the place).” Perhaps, this is what the Saṃyutta commentary tries to do in this gloss: *vidhūpeti na sandhūpeti ti nibbāpeti na jālāpeti*, “*vidhūpeti na sandhūpeti* means ‘he extinguishes, he does not kindle’” (SA 2:296), which finds support in the Sutta Nipāta commentary, where the participle *vidhāpitā* is glossed as *dadḍhā*, “burnt, consumed (by fire),”<sup>26</sup> hence “extinguished” (*nibbāpeti*). The imagery here is clearly in reference to attaining nirvana, where the fire of suffering is out for good.

### 3 Sutta practice

This is an excellent and efficacious sutta for insight cultivation or spiritual reflection: it should either be reflectively read aloud for the meditation of the congregation, or recorded and replayed for personal reflection. Communal reading of such suttas will have a similar beneficial effect. Each sutta verse or section could be read by an individual or by a section of the gathering in turn for variety.

The Sutta’s efficacy lies in our meditating on it in all its fullness. While listening to such a sutta, we should not analyze it in any way, but simply let it sink in (like listening to good music). Let the sutta speak for itself, as it were.

In due course, its import of wisdom would fruit, perhaps gradually, perhaps in a burst of insight. In fact, constant reflection on such a sutta in this manner serves better spiritually than a traditional puja, especially when we are ignorant or uncertain of the import of the puja passages. An abridged version of such suttas, however, may be helpful only in giving an academic or intellectual appreciation of it, or simply as an introductory summary.

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<sup>23</sup> V 1:2 (*vidhūpayam Māra, senam*); S 1:14, 3:90 = A 5:325; S 4:210.

<sup>24</sup> S 3:89; Pm 2:107.

<sup>25</sup> V 1:225; Sn p15 (= *samantā dhūpāyati*, SnA 154).

<sup>26</sup> SnA 2:409 ad Sn 472. See **Sundarika Bhāra, dvāja S** (Sn 3.4, v472), SD 22.2.

**Table. Summary of the Khajjanīya Sutta teachings**

	<b>Form</b> ( <i>rūpa</i> )	<b>Feeling</b> ( <i>vedanā</i> )	<b>Perception</b> ( <i>saññā</i> )	<b>Formations</b> ( <i>sankhāra</i> )	<b>Consciousness</b> ( <i>viññāṇa</i> )
<b>1</b> <b>Definition</b> [§§5-9]	“It is trans- formed” ( <i>ruppatī ti</i> ) by cold, hunger, etc <sup>27</sup>	“It feels” ( <i>vedayantī ti</i> ) pleasure, pain, neutral feeling	“It perceives” ( <i>sañjānātī ti</i> ) colours, etc	“It constructs” ( <i>abhisankhā- rontī ti</i> ) the conditioned	“It cognizes” ( <i>vijānātī ti</i> ) tastes, etc
<b>2</b> <b>Devoured</b> [§§10-15]	I <u>am</u> devoured by the aggregates. In the past, too, I <u>was</u> devoured in the same way. If I were to seek delight in the future, I <u>will be</u> devoured again just the same. Let me practise letting go leading to revulsion.				
<b>3</b> <b>Disowning</b> [§§16-20]	The aggregates are <u>impermanent, suffering, not self</u> . As such, they should not be regarded as “This is mine; this I am; this is my self.”				
<b>4</b> <b>Totality formula</b> [§§21-25]	Whatever kind of aggregate there is, whether <i>past, present, or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near</i> , all feeling should be seen as it really is with right wisdom thus: “ <u>This is not mine; this I am not this is not my self.</u> ” [For meanings of terms, see nn in text.]				
<b>5</b> <b>Learners</b> [§§26-30]	The learner (a saint of the path) <u>dismantles</u> the aggregates; he does not cling to them.				
<b>6</b> <b>Adept</b> [§§31-37]	The adept (the arhat-become) feels <u>revulsion</u> towards the aggregates; he neither dismantles nor clings to them.				

<sup>27</sup> Cf **Vibhaṅga Comy**: “it makes visible, hence it is form” (*rūpayatī ti rūpaṃ*) (VbhA §211/45).

## The Discourse on the Devoured

S 22.79

1-2 At Sāvathī.

### What is recalled?

3 “Bhikshus, those recluses and brahmins who recall many past lives, all recall the five aggregates of clinging, or a certain one amongst them.<sup>28</sup>

What are the five?

4 Bhikshus,

when recalling thus:	‘I had such <u>form</u> in the past,’	it is just <i>form</i> that one recalls.
When recalling thus:	‘I had such <u>feeling</u> in the past,’	it is just <i>feeling</i> that one recalls.
When recalling thus:	‘I had such <u>perception</u> in the past,’	it is just <i>perception</i> that one recalls.
When recalling thus:	‘I had such <u>formations</u> in the past,’	it is just <i>formations</i> that one recalls.
When recalling thus:	‘I had such <u>consciousness</u> in the past,’	it is just <i>consciousness</i> that one

recalls.

### Definitions of the aggregates

5 And what, bhikshus, is called **form** (*rūpa*)?<sup>29</sup>

It is transformed [molested] (*ruppati*), bhikshus, therefore it is called form.<sup>30</sup>

Transformed [molested] by what?

Transformed [molested] by cold, transformed by heat, transformed by hunger, transformed by thirst, transformed by the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and serpents.

It is transformed, bhikshus, therefore it is called form.

6 And what, bhikshus, is called **feeling** (*vedanā*)?

It feels (*vedayati*), bhikshus, therefore it is called feeling.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Comy says that this does not refer to the recollection of lives by direct knowledge (*abhiññā*), but to the recollection of one’s past lives by way of insight (*vipassanā*) (SA 2:289). **Bodhi**: “[Comy] seems to understand the purport of the Buddha’s statement to be that they *deliberately* recollect the past in terms of the aggregates. I take the point differently, ie, that though these ascetics imagine they are recalling the past experience of a permanent self, they are only recollecting past configurations of the five aggregates. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the next paragraph, which reduces first-person memories (*evam, rūpo ahoṣiṃ*) to experiences framed solely in terms of the aggregates (*rūpaṃ yeva*). It can also draw support from the parallel paragraph opening [of **Samanupassanā** S, S 22.47/3:46].” (S:B 1069 n108). Comy entitles this passage “the emptiness section” (*suññatā pabba*) (SA 2:289). **VbhA 3-6** gives more elaborate parallel comy.

<sup>29</sup> *Kiñ ca bhikkhave rūpaṃ vādetha*. Comy says that although emptiness (*suññatā*) is discussed here, it is not fully defined because the characteristic of emptiness (*suññatā, lakkhaṇa*) has not been discussed. It merely introduces the characteristic of emptiness. Using the simile of a cow, Comy says that the cow is like emptiness, and the cow’s characteristics are like the characteristic of emptiness: one discerns the cow by its characteristics; even so one will be able to discern emptiness by noticing its characteristics (SA 2:289 f). For details on form, see **Rūpa**, SD 17.2a.

<sup>30</sup> *Ruppattī kho bhikkhave tasmā rupan’ti vuccati*. Although the vb *ruppati* and the n *rūpa* look related, their roots are not related. **Ruppati** is a passive vb derived from √RUP = Skt LUP, to break, injure, spoil. SED: *rup* has *rupyate*, “to suffer violent or racking pain.” PED defines *ruppati* as “to be vexed, oppressed, hurt, molested,” & refs to S 3:86 & Sn 1121. Comy: *Ruppattī ti kuppattī ghaṭṭiyati pīḷiyati, bhijjati ti attho* (It is transformed means it is disturbed, stricken, oppressed, broken) (SA 2:290). Comys gives examples of how some existences (eg the cold hells, hot hells, intergalactic “black holes,” etc) “deform” those being there (SA 2:290 f; VbhA 3-5). SA adds that being “deformed” is the specific characteristic (*paccatta, lakkhaṇa*) of form, which distinguishes it from feeling and the other aggregates, but they share the general characteristics (*sāmañña, lakkhaṇa*), namely, impermanence, suffering, and not self (SA 2:292). See S:B 1070 n110 (where Bodhi also points out Woodward’s misunderstanding of comy).

<sup>31</sup> *Vediyantīti kho bhikkhave tasmā vedanā’ti vuccati*. Comy: It is the feeling itself that feels, not another, that is, not a being or a person (SA 2:292). In other words, there is only feeling, no feeler, ie no entity that feels.

And what does it feel?

It feels pleasure, it feels pain, [87] it feels neither-pain-nor-pleasure.

It feels, bhikshus, therefore it is called feeling.

7 And what, bhikshus, is called **perception** (*saññā*)?

It perceives (*sañjānāti*), bhikshus, therefore it is called perception.<sup>32</sup>

And what does it perceive?

It perceives blue, it perceives yellow, it perceives red, it perceives white.<sup>33</sup>

It perceives, bhikshus, therefore it is called perception.

8 And what, bhikshus, is called **formations** (*saṅkhārā*)?

They construct the conditioned (*saṅkhatam abhisankharonti*), bhikshus, therefore they are called formations.<sup>34</sup>

And what is the conditioned that they construct?

They construct conditioned form as form.<sup>35</sup>

They construct conditioned feeling as feeling.

They construct conditioned perception as perception.

They construct conditioned formations as formations.<sup>36</sup>

They construct conditioned consciousness as consciousness.<sup>37</sup>

They construct the conditioned, bhikshus therefore they are called formations.

9 And what, bhikshus, is called **consciousness** (*viññāṇa*)?

It cognizes (*viñānāti*), bhikshus, therefore it is called consciousness.<sup>38</sup>

And what does it cognize?

It cognizes sour, it cognizes bitter,

it cognizes spicy hot, it cognizes sweet,

it cognizes sharp, it cognizes mild [not sharp],

it cognizes salty, it cognizes bland [unsalted].<sup>39</sup>

It cognizes, bhikshus, therefore it is called consciousness.

<sup>32</sup> *Sañjānāti* *kho bhikkhave tasmā saññā'ti vuccati*. On *saññā*, see SD 17.5. Sue Hamilton, in *Identity and Experience*, points out that although the def of *viññāṇa* here encroaches on that of *saññā*, we should understand that *saññā* does the actual discrimination of the five sensory objects, identifying say, a taste, more precisely, while *viññāṇa* “is the awareness by which we experience every stage of the cognitive process, including the process of discriminating” (1996a:92). See S:B 1072 n114 & SD 17.8a (1). For details on *perception*, see *Saññā*, SD 17.4.

<sup>33</sup> For the difference btw *perception* (*saññā*) and *consciousness* (*viññāṇa*), see *Viññāṇa*, SD 17.8a (8.2).

<sup>34</sup> *Saṅkhatam abhisankharonti* *kho bhikkhave tasmā saṅkhārā'ti vuccanti*, lit “Bhikshus, they construct the constructed, therefore they are called constructions.” The English language is not rich enough to show the connection between the object *saṅkhata*, the vb *abhisankharoti*, and the subject *saṅkhāra*, all of which come from the same root and stem. (Indeed, through such a discourse, the language is being enriched.) See *Bodhi*'s n (S:B 1071 n112) and his discussion on *saṅkhāra* (S:B 44-47), & also (Pacetana) *Ratha,kāra S* (A 3.15/1:110-113), SD 17.7 Intro. “This passage shows the active role of *cetanā*, volition, in constructing experienced reality. Not only does volition influence the objective content of the experience, but it also shapes the psychophysical organism within which it has arisen and, via its role as *kamma*, shapes the future configurations of the five aggregates to be produced by *kamma*. In this connection, see [(Nava Purāṇa) *Kamma S* (S 35.146), SD 4.12] on the six sense bases as ‘old *kamma*’.” (S:B 1071 n112). For details on *formations*, see *Saṅkhāra*, SD 17.6.

<sup>35</sup> All eds read: *rūpaṃ rūpattāya saṅkhatam abhisankharonti*, and so, mutatis mutandis, for the other aggregates, except for *viññāṇa*, where PTS prob has wr *viññāṇattāy*: see S:B 1071 n113.

<sup>36</sup> All eds read: *saṅkhāre saṅkhārattāya saṅkhatam abhisankharonti*. Comy: The special characteristic of formations is intention (SA 2:292).

<sup>37</sup> All eds read: *viññāṇam voññāṇattāya saṅkhatam abhisankharonti*, except PTS: *viññāṇattāy* (prob wr): see S:B 1071 n113.

<sup>38</sup> *Vijānāti* *kho bhikkhave tasmā viññāṇan'ti vuccanti*. For details on *consciousness*, see *Viññāṇa*, SD 17.8a.

<sup>39</sup> The 8 kinds of taste are, respectively, *ambila*, *tittika*, *kaṭuka*, *madhuka*, *khārika*, *akhārika*, *loṇaka*, *aloṇaka*. See also *Sūda S* (S 47.8/5:149-152), SD 28.15, qu at Vism 4.122/150 f. For the difference btw *perception* (*saññā*) and *consciousness* (*viññāṇa*), see *Viññāṇa*, SD 17.8a (8.2).

### Devoured by the aggregates

**10** Therein, bhikṣus, the tutored noble disciple reflects thus:

**11** ‘I am right now being devoured by **form**.<sup>40</sup>

In the past, too, I was devoured by form in just the same way  
that I am now being devoured by a present form.

If I were to seek delight in a future form, then in the future, too,

I will be devoured by form in just the same way that I am now being devoured by the present form.’

11.2 Having reflected thus, he is indifferent<sup>41</sup> to a past form.

He does not delight in a future form.

He practises for sake of revulsion towards the present form,  
for its fading away, for its cessation.<sup>42</sup>

**12** ‘I am devoured by **feeling**.

In the past, too, I was devoured by feeling in just the same way  
that I am now being devoured by a present feeling.

If I were to seek delight in a future feeling, then in the future, too,

I will be devoured by feeling in just the same way [88]

that I am now being devoured by the present feeling.’

12.2 Having reflected thus, he is indifferent to a past feeling.

He does not delight in a future feeling.

He practises for sake of revulsion towards the present feeling,  
its fading away, for its cessation.

**13** ‘I am devoured by **perception**.

In the past, too, I was devoured by perception in just the same way  
that I am now being devoured by a present perception.

If I were to seek delight in a future perception, then in the future, too,

I will be devoured by perception in just the same way

that I am now being devoured by the present perception.’

13.2 Having reflected thus, he is indifferent to a past perception.

He does not delight in a future perception.

He practises for sake of revulsion towards the present perception,  
for its fading away, for its cessation.

**14** ‘I am devoured by **formations**.

In the past, too, I was devoured by formations in just the same way  
that I am now being devoured by present formations.

If I were to seek delight in future formations, then in the future, too,

I will be devoured by formations in just the same way

that I am now being devoured by the present formations.’

14.2 Having reflected thus, he is indifferent to past formations.

He does not delight in future formations.

He practises for sake of revulsion towards the present formations,

<sup>40</sup> *Aham kho etarahi rūpena khajjāmi*. Comy: The first two sections—the emptiness section (*suññatā pabba*) and that on the characteristic on not-self (*anattā pabba*)—have discussed the characteristic of not-self. Now the characteristic of suffering is discussed. Now, form does not devour one like a dog devouring a piece of meat by tearing it apart, but rather in a way that a soiled garment might cause discomfort, as when one says, “This dress is killing me” (*khādati maṃ vatthan ti*) (SA 2:271 f).

<sup>41</sup> Here, being “indifferent” (*anapekha*), ie, being carefree about it, free from any longing (or dislike) for it. Since there is “wise attention” (*yoniso mansikāra*) here, it is not the neglect shown by an ignorant person towards a neutral feeling, which reinforces the latent tendency of ignorance (*avijjā’ nusaya*): see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44.25/1:303), SD 40a.9; **Anusaya**, SD 31.3 (8).

<sup>42</sup> This concluding reflection, appearing for each of the aggregates here [§§11-15], is almost identical to those **Atī-tānāgata, paccupanna 1-3** (S 22.911/3:19 f).

for their fading away, for their cessation.

**15** ‘I am devoured by **consciousness**.

In the past, too, I was devoured by consciousness in just the same way that I am now being devoured by a present consciousness.

If I were to seek delight in a future consciousness, then in the future, too,

I will be devoured by consciousness in just the same way that I am now being devoured by the present consciousness.’

15.2 Having reflected thus, he is indifferent to a past consciousness.

He does not delight in a future consciousness.

He practises for sake of revulsion towards the present consciousness, for its fading away, for its cessation.

### Disowning the aggregates

**16** What do you think, bhikshus? Is **form** permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

16.2 “That which is impermanent, bhikshus, is it suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

16.3 “That which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change, is it fit to be regarded thus, ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self?’<sup>43</sup>

“No, bhante.”

**17** What do you think, bhikshus? Is **feeling** permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

17.2 “That which is impermanent, bhikshus, is it suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

17.3 “That which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change, is it fit to be regarded thus, ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self?’

“No, bhante.”

**18** What do you think, bhikshus? Is **perception** permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

18.2 “That which is impermanent, bhikshus, is it suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

18.3 “That which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change, is it fit to be regarded thus, ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self?’

“No, bhante.”

**19** What do you think, bhikshus? Are **formations** permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

19.2 “That which are impermanent, bhikshus, are they suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

19.3 “That which are impermanent, suffering, subject to change, are they fit to be regarded thus, ‘These are mine; these I am; these are my self?’

“No, bhante.” **[89]**

**20** What do you think, bhikshus? Is **consciousness** permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

20.2 “That which is impermanent, bhikshus, is it suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

20.3 “That which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change, is it fit to be regarded thus,

<sup>43</sup> These are the threefold graspings (*ti, vidha gāha*), or threefold ownings: “This is mine” (*etam mama*) arises through craving (*taṇhā, gāha*); “This I am” (*eso ’ham asmi*) arises through conceit (*māna, gāha*); “This is my self” (*eso me attā*) arises through wrong view (*diṭṭhi, gāha*). See also **Khemaka S** (S 22.89), SD 14.13 (4); **Anattā, -lakkhaṇa S** (S 3:68), SD 1.3; also SA 2:269.

‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self?’  
 “No, bhante.”

### The totality formula

**21** Therefore, bhikshus, whatever kind of **form** there is,  
 whether past, future, or present,  
 internal or external,  
 gross or subtle,  
 inferior or superior,  
 far or near,<sup>44</sup>

all forms should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom, thus:  
 ‘This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self.’

**22** Therefore, bhikshus, whatever kind of **feeling** there is,  
 whether past, future, or present,  
 internal or external,  
 gross or subtle,  
 inferior or superior,  
 far or near,

all feelings should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom, thus:  
 ‘This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self.’

**23** Therefore, bhikshus, whatever kind of **perception** there is,  
 whether past, future, or present,  
 internal or external,  
 gross or subtle,  
 inferior or superior,  
 far or near,

all perceptions should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom, thus:  
 ‘This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self.’

**24** Therefore, bhikshus, whatever kind of **formations** there are,  
 whether past, future, or present,  
 internal or external,  
 gross or subtle,  
 inferior or superior,  
 far or near,

all formations should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom, thus:  
 ‘They are not mine; these I am not; these are not my self.’

**25** Therefore, bhikshus, whatever kind of **consciousness** there is,

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<sup>44</sup> This “totality formula” classification of the aggregates is explained in detail in **Vibhaṅga** and briefly in **Visuddhi-magga**: “internal” (*ajjhatta*) = physical sense-organs; “external” (*bahiddhā*) = physical sense-objects; “gross” (*oḷārika*) = that which impinges (physical internal and external senses, with touch = earth, wind, fire); “subtle” (*subhuma*) = that which does not impinge (mind, mind-objects, mind-consciousness, and water); “inferior” (*hīna*) = desirable physical sense-objects (form, sound, smell, taste, and touch); “superior” (*pañña*) = desirable physical sense-objects (form etc); “far” (*dūre*) = subtle objects (“difficult to penetrate”); “near” (*santike*) = gross objects (“easy to penetrate”) (Vbh 1-13; Vism 14.73/450 f; Abhs 6.7). **Gethin**: “Whether or not the details of the Vibhaṅga exposition are accepted as valid for the *nikāyas*, it seems clear that this formula is intended to indicate how each *khandha* is to be seen as a class of states, manifold in nature and displaying a considerable variety and also a certain hierarchy” (1986:41). See Gethin 1986:40 f; Karunadasa 1967:38f; Boisvert 1995:43-48. As regards the terms “internal” (*ajjhatta*) and “external” (*bahiddhā*), it should be noted that they have two applications: (1) the aggregates (*khandhā*) composing a particular “person” are “internal” to them and anything else is “external”; (2) the sense-organs are “internal” and their objects—which may include aspects of the person’s own body or mind, which are “internal” in the first sense—are “external.” Boisvert (1995: 43, 47), however overlooks these applications.

whether past, future, or present,  
 internal or external,  
 gross or subtle,  
 inferior or superior,  
 far or near,

all consciousnesses should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom, thus:  
 ‘This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self.’

### The learners

**26** Bhikshus, this is called a noble disciple<sup>45</sup>

who dismantles [diminishes] and does not pile up;<sup>46</sup>

he abandons and does not cling;

he dissociates and does not associate;

he extinguishes and does not kindle.<sup>47</sup>

*apacināti no ācināti  
 pajahati no upādiyati  
 viseneti no usseneti  
 vidhūpeti na sandhūpeti*

**27** And what is it that **he dismantles and does not pile up?**

He dismantles form, he does not pile it up.

He dismantles feeling, he does not pile it up.

He dismantles perception, he does not pile it up.

He dismantles formations, he does not pile them up.

He dismantles consciousness, he does not pile it up.

**28** And what is it that **he abandons and does not cling to?**

He abandons form, he does not cling to it.

He abandons feeling, he does not cling to it.

He abandons perception, he does not cling to it.

He abandons formations, he does not cling to them.

He abandons consciousness, he does not cling to it.

**29** And what is it that **he dissociates from and does not associate with?**

He dissociates from form, he does not associate with it.

He dissociates from feeling, he does not associate with it.

He dissociates from perception, he does not associate with it.

He dissociates from formations, he does not associate with them.

He dissociates from consciousness, he does not associate with it. [90]

**30** And what is it that **he extinguishes and does not kindle?**

He extinguishes form, he does not kindle it.

He extinguishes feeling, he does not kindle it.

He extinguishes perception, he does not kindle it.

He extinguishes formations, he does not kindle them.

He extinguishes consciousness, he does not kindle it.

<sup>45</sup> That is, a saint of the path, short of the arhat-become (one who has attained the fruition of arhathood).

<sup>46</sup> Comy says that having dealing with the 3 characteristics (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, non-self), this section deals only with the characteristic of unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha, lakkhaṇa*), viz, the abandoning of suffering or the rounds (*vaṭṭa*) of samsara, ie, the attaining of the path ending in arhathood (SA 2:296). It is possible to see these 4 sentences as referring to each of the 4 paths respectively, ie, streamwinning (“dismantling”), once-returning (“abandoning”), non-returning (“dissociating”) and path-arhathood (“extinguishing”). On the 8 kinds of saints, see **Attha Puggala S 1** (A 8.59), SD 15.10a(1).

<sup>47</sup> *Ayam vuccati bhikkhave ariya, sāvako apacināti no ācināti, pajahati na upādiyati, visineti no usseneti, vidhūpeti na sandhūpeti.* Here I follow Be, Ce, Se & Comy. Comy glosses the last 2 pairs of terms thus: *Visineti na usseneti ti vikirati na sampiṇḍeti; vidhūpeti na sandhūpeti ti nibbāpeti na jālāpeti* (SA 2:296). PTS has *viseneti, usseneti*, on which, see SD 12.4 (6.8). Cf **Pema S** (A 4.200/2:214-216). See S:B 1073 n117.

## The adept

31 Seeing thus,<sup>48</sup> bhikshus, the noble disciple **feels revulsion**

towards form,  
towards feeling,  
towards perception,  
towards formations,  
towards consciousness.

Through feeling revulsion, he becomes dispassionate.

Through being dispassionate, (his mind) is freed.

When it is freed, there arises the knowledge: ‘Freed am I!’

He understands:

‘Destroyed is birth. The holy life has been lived. What needs to be done has been done. There is no more of this state of being.’

32 Bhikshus, this is called a noble disciple who *neither* dismantles *nor* piles up.

Having dismantled, he stands [remains].<sup>49</sup> he neither abandons nor clings.

Having abandoned, he stands: he neither dissociates nor associates.

Having dissociated, he stands: he neither extinguishes nor kindles.<sup>50</sup>

33 And what is it, bhikshus, that **he neither dismantles nor piles up**, but having extinguished, he stands [remains]?<sup>51</sup>

Having dismantled, he stands: he neither dismantles form nor piles it up.<sup>52</sup>

Having dismantled, he stands: he neither dismantles feelings nor piles it up.

Having dismantled, he stands: he neither dismantles perception nor piles it up.

Having dismantled, he stands: he neither dismantles formations nor piles them up.

Having dismantled, he stands: he neither dismantles consciousness nor piles it up.

34 And having dismantled it, he stands—what is it, bhikshus, that he **neither abandons nor clings** to?

Having abandoned, he stands: he neither abandons form nor clings to it.

Having abandoned, he stands: he neither abandons feelings nor clings to it.

Having abandoned, he stands: he neither abandons perception nor clings to it.

Having abandoned, he stands: he neither abandons formations nor clings to them.

Having abandoned, he stands: he neither abandons consciousness nor clings to it.

35 And having abandoned, he stands—what is it, bhikshus, that he **neither dissociates from nor associates with**?

Having dissociated, he stands: he neither dissociates from form nor associates with it.

Having dissociated, he stands: he neither dissociates from feelings nor associates with it.

Having dissociated, he stands: he neither dissociates from perception nor associates with it.

Having dissociated, he stands: he neither dissociates from formations nor associates with them.

Having dissociated, he stands: he neither dissociates from consciousness nor associates with it.

36 And having dissociated, he stands—what is it, bhikshus, that he **neither extinguishes nor kindles**?

Having extinguished, he stands: he neither extinguishes form nor kindles it.

<sup>48</sup> Subcomy says this expression refers to the non-returner (*anāgāmi*) (SAṬ:Be 2:239).

<sup>49</sup> “Stands [remains]” (*thito*) here means that the arhat’s spiritual change is permanent (ie, he does not regress), and remains so until his final awakening (passing away without rebirth).

<sup>50</sup> *Ayam vuccati bhikkhave bhikkhu nev’ācināti na apacināti, apacinitvā thito n’eva pajahati na upādiyati, pajahitvā thito n’eva visineti na ussineti, visinetvā thito n’eva vidhūpeti na sandhūpeti.* This refers to the arhat (SA 2:-296). The object—the aggregates—is omitted in this Pali construction, but is implicit. This construction is deliberate with the aim of reflecting the fact that the arhat has given up all the aggregates of clinging, and also showing that there are only deeds, no doer.

<sup>51</sup> *Vidhūpetvā thito kiñca n’ev’ācināti na apacināti.*

<sup>52</sup> *Apacinitvā thito rūpam n’ev’ācināti na apacināti.*

Having extinguished, he stands: he neither extinguishes feelings nor kindles it.  
Having extinguished, he stands: he neither extinguishes perception nor kindles it.  
Having extinguished, he stands: he neither extinguishes formations nor kindles them.  
Having extinguished, he stands: he neither extinguishes consciousness nor kindles it.

37 Having extinguished, he stands thus freed in mind—this monk, bhikshus, the devas together with Indra,<sup>53</sup> the devas together with Brahmā, the devas together with Prajāpati, worship from afar. [91]

Homage to you, O thoroughbred of men!<sup>54</sup>  
Homage to you, O highest of men!  
We ourselves do not directly know,  
relying on what that you meditate.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>53</sup> See Intro (1) above. On Indra (Shakra) and Prajāpati, see **Dhajagga S** (S 11.3/1:218-220), SD 15.5 (3). On Brahmā, see **Āyācana S** (S 6.1/1:136-138), SD 12.2 Intro. See also **Sigāl'ovāda S** (D 31), SD 4.1 (2). **Alagaddūpa-ma S** (M 22) mentions how these 3 Vedic high gods, when they seek the consciousness of one freed, are unable to find it (M 22.36/1:140), SD 3.13.

<sup>54</sup> This stanza is found in **Sandha S** (A 11.10), where it appears thrice and clearly fits the context better than here (A 11.10/5:324-326). The mention of these Vedic gods is for the benefit of those who in the Buddha's time believe in them, but showing them to be still unfreed and less knowing than an arhat.